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ARTICLES

WHO IS NIETZSCHE'S ZARATHUSTRA? *

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IT WOULD SEEM that the question is easy to answer. For we find Nietzsche's own answer stated in clear sentences which are even italicized. They occur in his book devoted specifically to the figure of Zarathustra. The book has four parts, was written from 1883 to 1885, and bears the title *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*

Nietzsche gave it a sub-title: *A Book for Everyone and No One. For Everyone* does not, of course, mean for just anybody. *For Everyone* means for each man as man, in so far as his essential nature becomes at any given time an object worthy of his thought. *And No One* means for none of the idle curious who come drifting in from everywhere, who merely intoxicate themselves with isolated fragments and particular aphorisms from this work; who won't proceed along the path of thought that here seeks its expression, but blindly stumble about in its half-lyrical, half-shrill, now deliberate, now stormy, often lofty and sometimes trite language.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One. In what uncanny fashion the sub-title has come true in the seventy years since its first appearance—though precisely in the reverse sense! It became a book for every man, and to this day no thinker has appeared who is equal to its fundamental thought and able to assess the full significance of its origin. Who is Zarathustra? If we read the title of the work attentively, we will find a hint. *Thus*

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Spoke Zarathustra. Zarathustra speaks. He is a speaker. What sort of speaker? Is he an orator, even a preacher? No. The speaker Zarathustra is an "advocate"—a Fürsprecher. Here we meet a very old German word, with several meanings. "Für" (for) actually means "vor" (fore). "Fürtuch" is still in use today in the Alemannic dialect for "pinafore." The "advocate" (Fürsprech) advocates and is the spokesman. But "für" also means "for the benefit, or in behalf of" and "in justification of." An advocate is ultimately the man who interprets and explains that of and for which he speaks.

Zarathustra is an advocate in this three-fold sense. But what does he advocate? In whose behalf does he speak? What does he endeavor to interpret? Is Zarathustra just any advocate for just anything, or is he *the* advocate for the one thing that always and first of all addresses man?

Toward the end of Part Three of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* there is a section called "The Convalescent." He is Zarathustra. But what does "the convalescent" mean? "To convalesce" (*genesen*) is the same as the Greek *néomai, nóstos.* This means "to return home"; nostalgia is the aching for home, homesickness. The convalescent is the man who collects himself to return home, that is to turn in, into his own destiny. The convalescent is on the road to himself, so that he can say of himself who he is. In the passage referred to, the convalescent says: "I, Zarathustra, the advocate of life, the advocate of suffering, the advocate of the circle. . . ."

Zarathustra speaks on behalf of life, suffering, the circle, and this is what he advocates. These three things, "life, suffering, circle," belong together, are the same. If we were able to think this threefoldness correctly, as one and the same thing, we could surmise whose advocate Zarathustra is, and who he himself would be as that advocate. Of course, we could now break in with a crude explanation, and assert with undeniable correctness: in Nietzsche's language, "life" means the will to power as the fundamental characteristic of all beings, not only of man. What "suffering" means Nietzsche states in the following words: "All that suffers, wills to live" (W.W.VI, 469), i.e., everything whose way is the will to power. This means: "The formative powers col-

lide" (XVI, 151). "Circle" is the sign of the ring which flows back into itself, and so always achieves the recurring selfsame.

Accordingly, Zarathustra presents himself as the advocate of the fact that all being is will to power, which suffers as creative, colliding will, and thus wills itself in the eternal recurrence of the same.

With that statement we have reduced the essence of Zarathustra to a definition, as one says in the classroom. We can write this definition down, memorize it, and produce it as needed. We can even substantiate the matter by referring to those sentences, italicized in Nietzsche's work, which state who Zarathustra is.

In the section already mentioned, "The Convalescent," we read: "*You* [Zarathustra] *are the teacher of the eternal recurrence* . . . !" And in the Preface to the whole work we read: "*I* [Zarathustra] *teach you the superman.*"

According to these passages the advocate Zarathustra is a "teacher." He seems to teach two things: the eternal recurrence of the same, and the superman. But it is not immediately apparent whether what he teaches belongs together and in what manner. Yet even if the connection became clear, it would remain uncertain whether we are hearing the advocate, whether we are learning from this teacher. Without such hearing and learning we never quite know who Zarathustra is. Hence, it is not enough merely to compile sentences showing what the advocate and teacher says about himself. We must heed *how* he says it, on what occasion, and with what intent. The decisive words, "You are the teacher of the eternal recurrence," Zarathustra does not utter to himself. It is what his animals tell him. They are identified immediately at the beginning and more clearly at the conclusion of the work's prologue. Here it says: ". . . when the sun stood high at noon, then he [Zarathustra] looked into the air inquiringly for overhead he heard the shrill call of a bird. And behold! An eagle soared through the air in wide circles and on him there hung a snake, not like prey but like a friend: for she kept herself wound around his neck." In this mysterious embrace we already have a presentiment of how circle and ring are implicitly entwined in the circling of the eagle and the winding of the snake. So this ring, called *anulus aeternitatis*, sparkles: seal ring and year of eternity. The

sight of the two animals, circling and forming circles, shows where they belong. For the eagle and the snake never first compose a circle, rather they conform to it, thus to obtain their own nature. At their sight, there emerges what concerns Zarathustra, gazing into the air inquiringly. Therefore the text continues:

> 'They are my animals!' said Zarathustra and rejoiced.
> 'The proudest animal under the sun and the wisest animal under the sun—they have gone out on a search.'
> 'They want to ascertain whether Zarathustra still lives. Indeed, do I still live?'

Zarathustra's question retains its importance only if we understand the indeterminate word "life" in the sense of "will to power." Zarathustra asks: does my will accord with the will which, as will to power, prevails in all beings?

Zarathustra's animals ascertain his nature. He asks himself whether he still is, i.e., whether he already is who he really is. In a note to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* from the literary remains (XIV, 279), we read: " 'Do I have time to *wait* for my animals? If they are *my* animals, they will know how to find me.' Zarathustra's silence."

So Zarathustra's animals, in the passage from "The Convalescent" cited before, tell him the following, which the italicized sentence must not cause us to overlook. They say: "For your animals know well, Zarathustra, who you are and must become: behold, *you are the teacher of the eternal recurrence*—that is now *your* destiny!"

And so it comes out. Zarathustra must first of all *become* who he is. Zarathustra recoils in horror from this becoming. That horror pervades the entire work presenting his character. That horror determines the style, the hesitant and constantly arrested course of the entire book. That horror stifles all Zarathustra's self-assurance and arrogance from the very outset. One who has not previously and does not constantly perceive the horror in all the discourses—seemingly arrogant and often ecstatically conducted as they are—will never know who Zarathustra is.

If Zarathustra is still to become the teacher of the eternal

recurrence, he obviously cannot begin with this doctrine. That is why that other phrase stands at the beginning of his path: *"I teach you the superman."*

But when we use the word "superman" we must from the start ward off all the false and confusing overtones the word has to the common understanding. Nietzsche does not give the name "superman" to man such as exists until now, only superdimensional. Nor does he mean a type of man who tosses humanity aside and makes sheer caprice the law, titanic rage the rule. Rather, taking the word quite literally, the superman is the individual who surpasses man as he is up to now, for the sole purpose of bringing man till now into his still unattained nature and there to secure him. A posthumous note to *Zarathustra* says: "Zarathustra wants to *lose* no past of mankind, to throw everything into the melting pot" (XIV, 271).

But where does the call of distress for the superman come from? Why does prevailing man no longer suffice? Because Nietzsche recognizes the historical moment in which man prepares to assume dominion over the whole earth. Nietzsche is the first thinker who, in view of a world-history emerging for the first time, asks the decisive question and thinks through its metaphysical implications. The question is: is man, as man in his nature till now, prepared to assume dominion over the whole earth? If not, what must happen to man as he is, so that he may be able to "subject" the earth and thereby fulfill the word of an old testament? Must man as he is then not be brought *beyond* himself if he is to fulfill this task? If so, then the "super-man" rightly understood cannot be the product of an unbridled and degenerate imagination rushing headlong into the void. Nor, however, can the superman species be discovered historically through an analysis of the modern age. Hence we may never seek the superman's essential structure in those personages who, as the chief functionaries of a shallow and misconstrued will to power, are pushed to the top of that will's various organizational forms. One thing, however, we ought soon to notice: This thinking which aims at the figure of a teacher who will teach the super-man, concerns us, concerns Europe, concerns the whole earth not just today but tomorrow even more. It does so whether we accept it or oppose it,

ignore it or imitate it in false accents. All essential thinking passes inviolably through all partisanship and opposition.

What is at stake, then, is that we must first learn how to learn from the teacher, even if it were only to raise questions that go beyond him. Only then shall we one day discover who Zarathustra is—or we will never discover it.

Still, it remains to be considered whether the inquiry beyond Nietzsche's thinking can be a continuation of his thought, or must be a step backward.

It remains first to be considered whether this "step backward" signifies only a retreat to an historically ascertainable past which one would wish to revive (for instance, Goethe's world), or whether the "step backward" points to a past whose origin still awaits remembrance in order to become a beginning which breaks upon the dawn.

But let us here confine ourselves to learning a few preliminaries about Zarathustra. The best way to accomplish this is to try to accompany the teacher's first steps. He teaches by showing. He looks ahead into the nature of the superman and gives it visible shape. Zarathustra is only the teacher, not yet the superman himself. And again, Nietzsche is not Zarathustra, but the questioner who attempts in thought to grasp Zarathustra's nature.

The superman surpasses previous and contemporary man, and is therefore a passage, a bridge. If we, the learners, are to follow the teacher who teaches the superman, we must, to stay with the metaphor, get on to the bridge. The passage will be understood fairly completely if we observe three things:

1. That from which the person passing over departs.
2. The bridge itself.
3. The destination of the person crossing over.

This destination must be kept in view—by us, first of all, by him who crosses over, and above all by the teacher who is to reveal it. If fore-sight into the destination is lacking, then the crossing over remains without direction, and that from which the one who crosses must free himself remains undetermined. On the other hand, what summons the person crossing over shows itself in full clarity only when he has crossed. To the person crossing over, and indeed to the teacher who is to show the bridge, to Zarathustra

himself, the destination remains always at a distance. The distant abides. By abiding it remains near, in that nearness which preserves what is distant as distant, in recalling it and thinking toward it. This proximity in recollection to what is distant is called "Sehnsucht" (longing) in German. The word "Sucht" (sick) is a variant of "seek" and is mistakenly associated with "search." The ancient word "Sucht" means sickness, suffering, pain.

Longing is the agony of the nearness of the distant.

The longing of the person crossing over is directed toward that to which he crosses. The person crossing over and even the teacher who shows him the way is, as we said before, on the way to his authentic nature. He is the convalescent. In Part Three of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "The Convalescent" is followed immediately by "On the Great Longing." With this section, the third from the end of Part Three, the entire work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* reaches its climax. Nietzsche writes in a posthumous note: "A *divine* suffering is the content of Part Three of Zarathustra" (XIV, 285).

In "On the Great Longing," Zarathustra is conversing with his soul. According to Plato's doctrine, which became decisive for Western metaphysics, the essence of thought resides in the soul's conversation with itself. It is the *logos hon aute pros auten he psyche diexerchetai peri on an skope*: the self-gathering in conversation, which the soul undergoes on its way to itself in the surroundings of whatever it perceives (*Theaetetus* 189e; *Sophist* 263e).*

Zarathustra, in conversation with his soul, thinks his "most abysmal thought" ("The Convalescent," #1; cf. Part Three "On the Vision and the Enigma," #2). He opens the section "On the Great Longing" with the words: "O my soul, I taught you to say 'Today' and 'One Day' and 'Formerly' and to dance away over all Here and There and Yonder."

The three terms, "Today," "One Day," and "Formerly" are capitalized and set in quotation marks. They name the funda-

* Cornford translates: "A discourse that the mind carries on with itself about any subject it is considering" (*Theaetetus* 189e); "thinking is, precisely, the inward dialogue carried on by the mind with itself without spoken sound" (*Sophist*, 263e). (Tr.)

mental features of time. The manner in which Zarathustra pronounces them points toward what he must henceforth tell himself in the foundation of his being. And what is that? That "One Day" and "Formerly," future and past, are like "Today." But the present is like the past and like the future. All three phases of time merge as one, as the selfsame, into a single present, an eternal Now. Metaphysics calls the permanent Now "eternity." Nietzsche, too, conceives the three phases of time from the standpoint of eternity as a permanent Now. But, for Nietzsche, the permanence does not consist in something static, but in a recurrence of the same. When Zarathustra teaches his soul to say those words, he is the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the same. Eternal recurrence is the inexhaustible fullness of joyful-painful life. That is the point of the "great longing" of the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the same.

That is why the "great longing" is in the same section also called "the longing of overfullness."

"The great longing" lives mostly by virtue of that from which it draws the sole solace, that is, confidence. The older German work "Trost" (*solace*, compare: *betroth*, *trust*) has been replaced by the word "hope." "The great longing" that inspires Zarathustra attunes and determines him to his "greatest hope."

But what entitles and leads him to it?

What bridge allows him to cross over to the superman, and in that crossing allows him to take leave of man as he is until now, so that he frees himself from him?

It is in the peculiar structure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which is to show the crossing, that the answer to this question is presented in the preparatory Part Two. Here, in the section "On the Tarantulas," Nietzsche has Zarathustra say: "For *that man be delivered from revenge*, that is the bridge to the highest hope for me and a rainbow after long storms."

How strange and puzzling these words must seem to the prevailing view of Nietzsche's philosophy that has been fabricated. Isn't Nietzsche considered the promoter of the will to power, of power politics and war, of the frenzy of the "blond beast"?

The words "that man be delivered from revenge" are in fact italicized. Nietzsche's thinking meditates deliverance from the

spirit of revenge. It intends to serve a spirit which as freedom from vengefulness precedes all mere brotherhood, but also every desire merely to punish; a spirit prior to all quests for peace and war mongering, and outside of that spirit which would establish and secure *pax*, peace, by pacts. In the same way the sphere of this freedom from revenge lies outside of pacifism, power politics, and calculating neutrality. It also lies outside of limp indifference and the shirking of sacrifice, and outside of blind acquisitiveness and action at all costs.

Nietzsche's alleged freethinking is a part of the spirit of freedom from revenge.

"*That man be delivered from revenge.*" Even if we do no more than vaguely grasp this spirit of freedom as the foundation of Nietzsche's thinking, then the still prevailing image of Nietzsche must crumble.

"For *that man be delivered from revenge:* that is the bridge to the highest hope for me," says Nietzsche. He thereby clearly states, in the language of preparatory concealment, where his "great longing" aims.

But what does Nietzsche mean here by revenge? What does deliverance from revenge consist of, according to him?

We shall be content to shed a little light on these two questions. Perhaps the light will allow us to see more clearly the bridge which is to lead such thinking from man to-date across to the superman. That to which man crosses over, becomes visible in the crossing. We will then see more clearly how Zarathustra, as the advocate of life, of suffering, of the circle, is at the same time the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the same *and* of the superman.

But why does something so decisive depend upon deliverance from revenge? Where does its spirit hold sway? Nietzsche gives the answer in the third section from the end of Part Two of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It is called "On Deliverance." There it says: "*The spirit of revenge*, my friends, has so far been the subject of man's best reflection; and wherever there was suffering, there punishment was also wanted."

This sentence relates revenge at the outset to all of mankind's reflection to this date. Here reflection means not just any ponder-

ing, but that thinking in which man's relation to what is, to all beings, is grounded and attuned. In so far as man relates to beings, he represents being with reference to the fact that it is, what and how it is, how it might be and ought to be; in short, he represents being with reference to its Being. This representation is thinking.

According to Nietzsche's statement, that representation has so far been determined by the spirit of revenge. People assume that their relationship to that which is, is best if so determined.

In whatever manner man may represent beings as such to himself, he represents them in view of their Being. Because of this man always goes beyond beings and crosses over to Being. In Greek, "beyond" is *meta*. Hence man's every relationship to beings as such is in itself metaphysical. In understanding revenge as the spirit which attunes and determines man's relation to beings, Nietzsche conceives revenge metaphysically from the start.

Revenge is here not a mere theme of morality, nor is deliverance from revenge the task of moral education. Nor is revenge and vengefulness an object of psychology. Nietzsche sees the nature and significance of revenge metaphysically. But what does revenge really mean?

If for the moment we stay close to the literal meaning of the word, though with the necessary circumspection, we shall find a hint. "Rache," "to *wreak* vengeance," (ME) "wreken," (L) "urgere," all signify "to press close or hard," "drive," "drive out," "banish," "pursue." In what sense is revenge a persecution? Revenge does not, after all, simply intend to chase something, capture and take possession of it. Nor does it intend merely to destroy what it pursues. Avenging persecution opposes in advance that upon which it takes revenge. It opposes its object by degrading it so that, by contrasting the degraded object with its own superiority, it may restore its own validity, the only validity it considers decisive. For revenge is driven by the feeling of being vanquished and injured. During the years when Nietzsche created *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he wrote down the remark: "I advise all martyrs to consider whether it was not revenge that drove them to extremes" (XIII, 298).

What is revenge? We may now say tentatively: revenge is

opposing, degrading persecution. Is this persecution supposed to have sustained and pervaded all reflection so far, all representation to this day of beings with regard to their Being? If the spirit of revenge deserves such metaphysical significance, it must be discernible in the structure of metaphysics. In order to succeed in discerning that to some degree, let us observe the essential character in which the Being of beings appears within modern metaphysics. That essential character of Being finds its classic expression in a few sentences written by Schelling in 1809, in his *Philosophical Investigation Concerning the Nature of Human Freedom and its Object*. They declare: "In the final and highest instance there is no being other than willing. Willing is primal being and to it alone [willing] belong all [primal being's] predicates: being unconditioned, eternity, independence of time, self-affirmation. All philosophy strives only to find this highest expression" (F. W. J. Schelling, Vol. 1, p. 419).

The predicates which thought has since antiquity attributed to Being, Schelling finds in their final, highest and hence most perfected form in willing. But the will in this willing does not here denote a capacity of the human soul. The word "willing" here signifies the Being of beings as a whole. It is will. That sounds strange to us, and indeed is strange as long as we remain strangers to the sustaining thoughts of Western metaphysics. And we will remain strangers as long as we do not think these thoughts but merely go on forever reporting them. We can, for instance, ascertain Leibniz's statements about the Being of beings, with historical precision, and yet never think a jot of what he thought when he defined the Being of beings from the perspective of the monad, as the unity of *perceptio* and *appetitus*, the unity of representation and striving, that is as will. The object of Leibniz's thought finds expression through Kant and Fichte as the rational will, which Hegel and Schelling, each in his own way, then reflect upon. Schopenhauer has the same thing in mind when he titles his major work *The World* (not Man) *as Will and Representation*. And Nietzsche thinks the same thing when he recognizes the primal being of beings as the will to power.

That the Being of beings here emerges throughout as will, does not depend upon opinions a few philosophers have formed

about beings. What this appearance of Being as will signifies, no learned analysis will ever disclose; it can only be searched for in thought when it is deemed worthy of questioning as that which is pursued in thought, and thus can be secured in recollection.

For modern metaphysics, and within its particular expression, the Being of beings appears as will. Man is man, however, in that he thoughtfully relates to beings and is thereby sustained in Being. Thought must correspond in its own nature to that to which it is related, to the Being of beings as will.

Now, according to Nietzsche, thought so far has been determined by the spirit of revenge. How does Nietzsche conceive the nature of revenge, assuming he thinks it metaphysically?

In Part Two of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in the section "On Deliverance," Nietzsche has his Zarathustra say: "This, yes this alone, is *revenge* itself: the will's aversion to time and its 'It was'."

That a determination of the essence of revenge stresses what is repugnant and resistant in vengeance and thus stresses an aversion, corresponds to the peculiar persecution which we have characterized as revenge. But Nietzsche does not merely say: revenge is aversion. That is true also of hatred. Nietzsche says: revenge is the will's aversion. But "will" signifies the Being of beings as a whole, not only human willing. By characterizing revenge as "the will's aversion," it retains its resistant persecution from the outset within the region of the Being of beings. That this is the case becomes clear when we observe against what the will's aversion is directed. Revenge is "the will's aversion to time and its 'It was'."

At a first, a second and even a third reading of this determination of the essence of revenge, the emphasized relationship of revenge to "time" will seem surprising, incomprehensible and finally arbitrary. This must be so, if we no further reflected upon what the term "time" here means.

Nietzsche says: revenge is "the will's aversion to time. . . ." This does not say aversion to something temporal. Nor does it say aversion to a specific characteristic of time. It simply says, "aversion to time."

To be sure, the words "aversion to time" are immediately followed by "and its 'It was'." But this says that revenge is aversion

to the "It was" within time. It will rightly be pointed out that time includes not only the "It was" but, just as essentially, the "It will be" and the "It is now." For time is determined not only by the past, but also by the future and the present. Therefore, when Nietzsche places great stress on time's "It was," he obviously does not intend his characterization of the nature of revenge to refer to "the" time as such, but to a particular aspect of time. Yet, what is the situation with regard to "the" time? Time is situated in passing. Time passes by ceasing to be. That which arrives in time arrives not to abide, but to pass on. Where to? Into transience. When a person has died, we say that he has passed on. The temporal signifies what must pass, the transient.

Nietzsche defines revenge as "the will's aversion to time and its 'It was'." That appended definition does not single out one characteristic of time by neglecting the other two. Rather, it identifies the foundation of time in its entire and intrinsic time-essence. Nietzsche's "and" in "time and its 'It was'," is not simply a transition to an additional specific feature of time. "And" here is the same thing as "and that means." Revenge is the will's aversion to time, and that means the ceasing to be and its transience. The will no longer has any influence over it, and its willing constantly runs up against it. Time and its "It was" is the stumbling-block which the will cannot budge. Time, as transience, is the adversity which the will suffers. As a suffering will, it suffers transience, wills its own cessation as suffering and, thereby, wills the disappearance of all things. The aversion to time degrades the transient. The earthly, the earth and all that is part of it, really should not be and, at bottom, is devoid of true Being. Plato had already called it *me on*, non-being.

According to Schelling's statements, which only express the principal idea of all metaphysics, "independence of time, eternity" are primal predicates of Being.

But the deepest aversion to time does not consist of the mere degradation of the earthly. For Nietzsche, the most profound revenge consists of that reflection which posits eternal Ideals as the absolute, compared with which the temporal must degrade itself to actual non-being.

How is man to assume dominion over the earth, how is he to

take the earth, as earth, into his guardianship, if and as long as he degrades the earthly in that the spirit of revenge determines his reflection? If saving the earth as earth is at stake, then the spirit of revenge must first vanish. That is why deliverance from the spirit of revenge is the bridge to the highest hope for Zarathustra.

Yet, of what does this deliverance from aversion to transience consist? In a liberation from the will itself? In Schopenhauer's sense and that of Buddhism? To the extent that the Being of beings is will in modern metaphysical theory, deliverance from the will would, simultaneously, be deliverance from Being, a fall into empty nothingness. To Nietzsche, deliverance from revenge is indeed deliverance from what is repugnant, resistant and degrading in the will, but not a release from all willing. Deliverance liberates aversion from its *No*, and frees it for a *Yes*. What does this *Yes* affirm? Precisely what the aversion of the spirit of revenge negates: time, transience.

This *Yes* to time is the will that would have transience abide, would not have it degraded to nihility. But how can transience abide? Only in such a way that, as transience, it does not just constantly pass, but always comes to be. It would abide only in such a way that transience and what ceases to be return as the self-same in its coming. But this recurrence itself is abiding only if it is eternal. According to metaphysical theory, the predicate "eternal" belongs to the Being of beings.

Deliverance from revenge is the bridge from contempt for time, to the will that represents beings in the eternal recurrence of the same, in which the will becomes the advocate of the circle.

In other words: Only when the Being of beings is represented to man as the eternal recurrence of the same, only then can man cross the bridge and, crossing over, delivered from the spirit of revenge, be the superman.

Zarathustra is the teacher who teaches the superman. But he teaches this doctrine solely because he is the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the same. This thought of the eternal recurrence of the same is of primary importance, it is the "most abysmal" thought. That is why the teacher expresses it last of all, and then always reluctantly.

Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra? He is the teacher whose

doctrine would liberate previous reflection from the spirit of revenge unto a *Yes* to the eternal recurrence of the same.

As the teacher of the eternal recurrence, Zarathustra teaches the superman. A posthumous note expresses the refrain of this doctrine thus: "Refrain: *Love alone shall have jurisdiction* (creative love which *forgets* itself in its works)."

Zarathustra does not teach two different things as the teacher of the eternal recurrence and of the superman. What he teaches belongs internally together, because each demands the other in response. This response, its mode of being and the manner in which it withholds itself, conceals within itself and yet also reveals the figure of Zarathustra and, thus, lets it become worthy of thought.

But the teacher knows that what he teaches remains a vision and an enigma. In this reflective knowledge, he abides.

Because of the peculiar ascendency of modern science, we modern men are ensnared in the singular error which holds that knowledge can be obtained from science, and that thought is subject to the jurisdiction of science. But that which is unique in what a thinker is able to express can neither be demonstrated nor refuted logically or empirically. Nor is it a matter of faith. It can only be made visible in questioning-thinking. What is then seen always appears as that which is always *worthy* of questioning.

So that we may see and retain the vision of the enigma which Zarathustra's figure reveals, let us again observe the view of his animals which appears to him at the beginning of his journey: ". . . then he looked into the air inquiringly—for overhead he heard the shrill call of a bird. And behold! An eagle soared through the air in wide circles and on him there hung a snake, not like prey but like a friend. For she kept herself wound around his neck. 'They are my animals,' said Zarathustra and rejoiced."

And the passage from "The Convalescent," #1, which was purposely quoted only in part earlier, runs: "I, Zarathustra, the advocate of life, the advocate of suffering, the advocate of the circle —I summon you, my most abysmal thought!"

Zarathustra identifies the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same with the same words—"my most abysmal thought"—in the section "On the Vision and the Enigma," #2, in Part Three.

There, in the altercation with the dwarf, Zarathustra tries for the first time to think the enigmatic character of what he sees as corresponding to his longing. The eternal recurrence of the same remains a vision for him, but also an enigma. It can be neither verified nor refuted logically or empirically. At bottom that is true of every thinker's essential thought: envisioned, but enigma —worthy of questioning.

Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra? We can now answer in a formula: Zarathustra is the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the same and the teacher of the superman. But now we see, perhaps we see even more clearly beyond the bare formula: Zarathustra is not a teacher who teaches two different things. Zarathustra teaches the superman because he is the teacher of the eternal recurrence. But conversely, as well, Zarathustra teaches the eternal recurrence because he is the teacher of the superman. Both doctrines belong together in a circle. By its circling, the doctrine accords with what is, the circle which constitutes the Being of beings, that is, the permanent within Becoming.

The doctrine and its thought reaches this circle when it crosses the bridge that is called deliverance from the spirit of revenge. Through it all previous thought is to be overcome.

There is a note from the period immediately after the completion of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in 1885, marked entry #617 in the material patched together from Nietzsche's literary remains and published under the title *The Will to Power*. The note bears the underlined heading: "Recapitulation." Nietzsche here gathers together the main point of his thinking, in a few sentences, with extraordinary lucidity. A parenthetical commentary on the text specifically mentions Zarathustra. The "Recapitulation" begins with the sentence: "To *impress* the character of Being upon Becoming—that is *the highest will to power.*"

The highest will to power, that is, the life-force in all life, is to represent transience as a fixed Becoming within the eternal recurrence of the same, and so to render it secure and stable. This representation is a thinking which, as Nietzsche notes emphatically, "impresses" upon being the character of its Being. This thinking takes becoming under its care and protection—becoming of which constant collision, suffering, is a part.

Is reflection to-date, is the spirit of revenge overcome by this thinking? Or is it that in this "impressing," which takes all becoming under the protection of the eternal recurrence of the same, there is nonetheless concealed an aversion to mere transience and, therefore, a supremely spiritualized spirit of revenge?

As soon as we ask that question, the impression arises that we are trying to impute to Nietzsche as his very own precisely what he seeks to overcome, that we are of the opinion that by such an imputation this thinker's thought were refuted.

But zealous attempts at refutation never get us on a thinker's path. They are part of the pettiness which must vent itself for the entertainment of the public. Moreover, Nietzsche himself had long ago anticipated the answer to our question. The work immediately preceding *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* appeared in 1882, under the title *Joyful Knowledge* (*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*). In its next-to-last section (341), Nietzsche's "most abysmal thought" is presented for the first time under the heading "The Greatest Stress." The concluding section which follows "The Greatest Stress" (number 342), is incorporated verbatim into *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, as the beginning of the prologue.

Rough drafts for the preface to *Joyful Knowledge* can be found in the literary remains (W. W. Vol. XIV, 404). There we read:

> A spirit strengthened by wars and victories, to whom conquest, adventure, danger, even pain have become a necessity; the habituation to sharp mountain air, to wintry walks, to ice and mountains in every sense; a sort of sublime malice and extreme exuberance of revenge—for there is *revenge* in it, revenge against life itself, when one who suffers greatly *takes life under his protection*.

What else remains for us to say but: Zarathustra's doctrine does not bring deliverance from revenge? We will say it. But we say it in no way as an alleged refutation of Nietzsche's philosophy. We do not even say it as an objection to his thinking. But we do say it in order to bring into focus how much and in what way even Nietzsche's thinking moves within the spirit of reflection to-date. Whether the spirit of thought till now has been encountered at all in its decisive nature when characterized as the spirit of revenge, we leave undecided. In any case, thought up to now is metaphysics, and Nietzsche's thinking presumably brings it to an end.

That is why something comes to the fore in Nietzsche's thought which that thinking itself can no longer think. Such a falling behind what has been thought is typical of creative thinking. And when a way of thinking brings metaphysics to completion, it points in an exceptional sense toward something unthought, clear and confused at the same time. But where are the eyes to see it?

Metaphysical thinking rests on the distinction between that which truly is, and that which by comparison does not constitute true being. But what is decisive for the *essence* of metaphysics does not lie by any means in the fact that this distinction appears as an opposition between the supersensible and the sensible. Instead, this distinction, in the sense of cleavage, remains the first and sustaining one. It persists even when the Platonic hierarchy of the supersensible and sensible is reversed, and the sensible is experienced in a more essential and broader sense, which Nietzsche called by the name *Dionysos.* For the overfullness which is the object of Zarathustra's "great longing" is the inexhaustible permanence of becoming, as which the will to power wills itself in the eternal recurrence of the same.

Nietzsche raised what is essentially metaphysical in his thinking to the extreme form of aversion in the last lines of his last book, *Ecce Homo; How you become what you are.* He wrote it in October 1888. It was not published until twenty years later, in a limited edition, and in 1911 it was included in volume XV of the *Grossoktav* edition. The last lines of *Ecce Homo* run: "Have I been understood?—*Dionysos versus the Crucified. . . .*"

Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra? He is the advocate of Dionysos. That is to say: Zarathustra is the teacher who teaches the eternal recurrence of the same in, and for the sake of, his doctrine of the superman.

Does that last sentence answer our question? No. It does not, even if we follow the references that explained it, in order to trace Zarathustra's path, even only to follow his first step across the bridge. But the sentence, which looks like an answer, would make us attentive, and bring us back more attentively to the title question.

Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra? The question now is: Who

is this teacher? Who is this being who appears within metaphysics at its stage of completion? Nowhere else in the history of Western metaphysics is the essential form of its respective thinkers actually expressed in this way, or more precisely and literally thought out; nowhere else, except at the beginning of Western thought in Parmenides, and there only in veiled contours.

It remains essential in the figure of Zarathustra that the teacher teaches something two-fold which belongs together, eternal recurrence and superman. In a sense, Zarathustra himself is this belonging-together. From that perspective he, too, remains an enigma which we have still hardly caught sight of.

"Eternal recurrence of the same" is the name of the Being of beings. "Superman" is the name of the human being who corresponds to this Being.

In what respect do Being and human being belong together? How do they belong together, if Being is neither of man's making, in man's power, nor man only a special case within being?

Can the belonging-together of Being and human being be discussed at all, as long as thought remains dependent upon the traditional concept of man? According to that concept, man is the *animal rationale*. Is it a coincidence or merely a poetic adornment that the two animals, eagle and snake, are with Zarathustra, that *they* tell him what he must become in order to be who he is? In the figure of the two animals, the union of pride and wisdom is to become apparent to the thoughtful reader. Yet we must know what Nietzsche thinks about the two. In notes from the time when *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was composed, we read: "It seems to me that *modesty* and *pride* are intimately connected. . . . Common to them is the cold, steady gaze of appraisal in both cases" (W.W. XIV, p. 99).

Elsewhere we read:

> We speak so stupidly about *pride*—and Christianity has even made us feel that it is *sinful*! The point is: he who *demands and obtains great things from himself* must feel very remote from those who do not—this *remoteness* is interpreted by those others as "a high opinion of himself"; but he knows it (the remoteness) only as ceaseless labor, war, victory, by day and night: of all this, the others know nothing! (*Ibid.*, p. 101)

The eagle—the proudest animal; the snake—the wisest animal. And both joined in the circle in which they soar, in the ring which encircles their being; and circle and ring once more intertwined.

The enigma, who Zarathustra is as the teacher of eternal recurrence *and* the superman, becomes a vision to us at the sight of the two animals. At that sight, we can immediately and more easily grasp what the exposition endeavored to show as worthy of questioning: the relation of Being to the human being.

"And behold! An eagle soared through the air in wide circles, and on him there hung a snake, not like prey but like a friend: for she kept herself wound around his neck.

"'They are my animals!' said Zarathustra and rejoiced."

⁂

Note on
The Eternal Recurrence of the Same

Nietzsche himself knew that his "most abysmal thought" remains an enigma. We are all the less free to think that we can solve the enigma. The obscurity of this final thought of Western metaphysics should not seduce us into avoiding that thought by subterfuge.

There are, fundamentally, only two subterfuges.

Either we say that this thought of Nietzsche is a kind of "mysticism" and has no place before thought.

Or we say: this thought is already ancient. It amounts to the familiar cyclical view of the course of the world. In Western philosophy it can first be found in Heraclitus.

This second account, like all others of this variety, says absolutely nothing. For what is gained by establishing that a thought is, for example, "already" to be found in Leibniz, or even "already" in Plato? What use is this information, if it leaves Leibniz's and Plato's thought in the same obscurity as the thought which such historical references are supposed to have cleared up?

As to the first evasion, however, according to which Nietzsche's thought of the eternal recurrence of the same is a fantastic mys-

ticism, it would seem that the present age should teach us to know better; assuming, of course, that thought is destined to bring the *essence* of modern technology to light.

What is the essence of the modern dynamo other than *one* expression of the eternal recurrence of the same? But the essence of that machine is not anything machine-like or even mechanical. Just as little may Nietzsche's thought of the eternal recurrence of the same be interpreted in a mechanical sense.

That Nietzsche experienced and expounded his most abysmal thought from the Dionysian standpoint, only suggests that he was still compelled to think it metaphysically, and only metaphysically. But it does not preclude that this most abysmal thought conceals something unthought, which also is impenetrable to metaphysical thinking.

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